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Unseen Aspects of the War

A. P. Sinnett

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TWO ARTICLES

BY

A. P. SINNETT

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UNSEEN ASPECTS OF THE WAR

OUR UNSEEN ENEMIES AND ALLIES

When dealing with familiar phenomena of the visible world around us, we are all alive to the fact that unseen, imperfectly comprehended forces underlie all the processes of Nature. Gravitation holds the earth together as a solid globe. It remains a mystery for science, but its effects are too obvious to allow of doubt as to its reality. Electricity, chemical affinity, molecular vibration are busy producing effects that the senses recognise, though we often lose sight of our ignorance concerning their origin as forces. We are rather more definitely impressed by consciousness of such ignorance concerning the phenomena of life, whether in the animal or vegetable manifestations thereof, but when we contemplate moral forces working in the direction of good or evil, their manifestations are so irregular that we seem to be dealing with phenomena outside the reign of law altogether. We account for them by dwelling on the vagaries of human impulse, on the conflict of rival desires, on the influence of philanthropy in one direction impeded by selfish passion in another. We have for the most part abandoned the primitive conceptions which attempted to account for the welfare or sufferings of mankind by the progress of a continual struggle on higher planes between personified powers of good and evil. Early thought invested them with attributes

assumed to be super-human but borrowed by imagination from human experience.

Recent progress of discovery in connexion with physical Nature has tended in more ways than one to rehabilitate views that former progress treated as empty superstition, though in all cases putting an improved complexion on the modern presentation of such ideas. Thus the medieval alchemist played with a crude belief that lead could be transmuted into gold, guided by his desire for the more precious metal. The gradual progress of chemical knowledge seemed to make the alchemist's dream absurd, and transmutation was treated as a silly superstition. Then radium made its entry on the stage, and revealed itself as in process (among other bewildering achievements) of transmutation into helium. The alchemist's belief ceased to be ridiculous. He had been to blame in one way. He had invited ridicule by caricaturing the idea he worked with. Growing science was to blame for its conceited belief that it understood the constitution of matter. Now we accept transmutation as a theoretical possibility because we have made some definite steps—thanks to Madame Curie—in the direction of knowledge relating to the constitution of matter, quite misunderstood when the chemical "elements" held possession of the stage.

In another department of superstition, mesmerism was slow in passing through the ordeals of incredulity. It lingered for a while in what has been called "the Pooh-pooh stage." Then it made people angry and entered on another, which has been called "the Bow-wow stage." At last, labelled with a new name, "hypnotic suggestion," it is recognised as a commonplace experience. For a time the ether was a mere hypothesis, denied presentation at (scientific) Court, refused recognition as an existent reality. But in time its waves acquired a commercial value, and electricians

now specialise in the ether, as doctors specialise in their favourite diseases.

Is it possible that some early superstitions that personified the principles of good and evil may in turn share in the illumination of modern thought, and, cleansed from much nonsense that gathered round them in the Middle Ages, be found to have a direct bearing on the stupendous experience the world is passing through in these years of ghastly suffering ?

Expressed in terms that are sufficiently vague, modern opinion does not altogether reject the teachings of established religion. In definite shape many of them are only treated with respect on Sundays, but much that has been taking place during the War has encouraged newspaper writers to suggest, even if only half in earnest, that spiritual powers of evil purpose must have had something to do with the investiture of the German character with the utterly diabolical cruelty giving rise to the Belgian atrocities. For a long time English people generally refused to believe the stories that came first to hand in reference to the treatment of Belgian women. It is needless to review them here in detail. The reports of our own, the French, and the Belgian Commissions dispose of all doubt or distrust in that connexion. The mere destruction of cathedrals or of places devoted to art and learning is a relatively insignificant outbreak of barbarity. Nor did the subjection of women to the outrages that were common in the warfare of the Middle Ages do more than show the Germans still far in the rear of moral civilisation ; but the hideous refinements of cruelty accompanying the sexual outrages of which the Germans have been guilty in this War distinguish them from all previous records of the kind. The crimes committed are unlike those of ordinary human depravity. At a glance they are suggestive, to say the least, of some abnormal influences operative to enhance the natural passions of

men set free from all moral restraint and let loose upon a helpless population. Such passions might suffice to account for outrages of the old-fashioned character. They do not account for the innumerable authenticated cases in which girls have not merely been outraged, but cut about and tortured to death with parents held to look on. Nor do we find an explanation of such horrors in the orders of the German leaders to terrify their enemies by "frightfulness." Those orders, themselves in need of explanation, might account for the bombardment of open towns and the destruction of cathedrals, or even for the deliberate slaughter of civilians. They do not account for the horrible treatment of women after passions have been gratified.

But turning aside now from the contemplation of what has actually been done in the search for the possible origin of influences that may accentuate ordinary human brutality, we have to explore some regions of "superstition" which may, like those already referred to in connexion with physical science, hint, when purified of superficial nonsense, at grave realities capable of being re-stated in terms acceptable to modern ears. The drift of experiment, fairly emerging now from the "Pooh-pooh stage" in which it was so long embarrassed, has convinced multitudes of students that human thought is a force capable of producing effects at a distance. "Telepathy" may not yet be universally recognised as illustrating this idea, but we have high scientific authority for treating it as a human faculty, not so common as sight and hearing, but as natural for those endowed with sense organs not yet developed in all cases. People who prefer a materialistic interpretation of life keep all studies connected with super-physical inquiry at arm's length, but those who can take cognisance of many natural phenomena that do not appeal to the familiar senses are now very numerous, and the wave of interest in research of that order is widely operative

in the present day. So we cannot but look back on medieval literature dealing with occult mysteries of sorts with a feeling quite unlike that to which it gave rise forty or fifty years ago. Once more early superstition is translated more or less successfully into terms of modern science ; and when we read stories about charms and incantations and ceremonial magic made use of to wreak vengeance on the victims of a ruthless magician's animosity, we are hardly now inclined to put them aside as so much childish nonsense. We are gradually coming to believe that some unseen and as yet imperfectly understood forces of Nature are subject to the control of human will. Some puzzles bequeathed to us by ancient history begin to be explicable, and megalithic architecture, for instance, provokes a guess pointing to the possibility that in former ages of the world powers that modern civilisation has lost touch with were used with beneficent purpose by the representatives of lofty moral progress, concurrently with the use, by the enemies of such progress, of the powers devoted to destruction.

The view of the subject thus faintly suggested leads to a fairly complete theory concerning the origin of evil. If we recognise the vast human family as designed to attain conditions of ultimate perfection, we can hardly fail to see that its attainment is only conceivable if we invest each growing unit with the will to be perfect. That will must be free. A being forced by supreme Divine power into a previously prepared mould would not be a genuine recruit for divinity. Each recruit must be a volunteer in that sublime organisation, and the corresponding possibility that some among the enormous numbers constituting the human family will misuse their freedom of will is obviously a risk that has to be reckoned with. From the first it must have been recognised as inevitable that some of the individual units invested with free

will would turn it to relatively ignoble purposes under the dictates of mere selfishness ; then by degrees to selfish purposes that disregarded the sufferings of others ; then eventually, as the degeneration continued, to conflict with the Divine idea as a motive in itself. Properly understood, poetical imagination is fortified by logical necessity in conceiving the idea of rebellion against God on the part of some among the myriads endowed with the power of choosing between rebellion and service.

From the earliest periods of human existence that we like to think about, there have been unfortunate manifestations of the tendency described, with the result that the world is burdened with the presence of large numbers of highly advanced beings definitely in arms against the Divine programme of human evolution. Certainly the numbers, large though they may be, are a minute minority as compared with the whole human family, but, in the progress of ages, some of them have attained to extraordinary heights of knowledge and power. For progress in that direction has nothing to do with moral excellence. The leaders of the Dark Host are not merely morally inferior to the worst criminals in our prisons ; they are wedded to evil as definitely as the most glorious angelic beings that poetic imagination can deal with are wedded to the principle of Divine love and benevolence. But that devotion to evil does not put the smallest impediment in the way of their progress in super-physical knowledge, in the development of spiritual powers, in the expansion of consciousness on planes of nature far superior to this on which consciousness is generally limited by our physical senses. Certainly the Dark Host includes all degrees and varieties of evil development. Most of its adherents are, relatively to the terribly sublime leaders, in the same positions as the privates of an army relatively to their generals, but the

energies of all are directed by the mighty chiefs, and, putting the main idea in a single sentence, they are the real authors of the present War.

How has it come to pass that this War has been definitely prophesied for many years in the past, in one remarkable case some centuries ago ? Because the intention of the great Dark leaders was known to those who have developed to great heights of power and knowledge in harmony with, in the service of, the Divine idea. They have conveyed hints of the terrible design to psychically endowed recipients, and these have duly recorded their visions or intuitions.

They who thus gave warning of the great evil design may be thought of as agents of the Divine purpose represented by humanity, in immediate touch with the progress of events on earth. The Divine hierarchy reaches upward towards infinity, but without attempting to expand that mighty truth more fully we may begin to frame a conception of the truth as regards " Our Unseen Enemies and Allies " in the present War.

We are enabled to realise that the Dark Host, whose origin and growth have been above described, is confronted on higher planes of activity, as well as on the actual fields of battle, by a corresponding host representing progress towards exalted perfection attained in the service of the Divine purpose. For those of us who have profited by modern opportunities of acquiring knowledge concerning the spiritual government of the world, the war on the higher planes now going on between the hosts of evil and good is the real war, on which the fortunes of that waged in Europe are absolutely dependent. If the Dark Host were not confronted by the other, the Germans, assisted by their super-physical powers, would long ago have swept away the resistance of the Allied troops ; would have established the hideous domination of the Prussian system

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over France and Great Britain; and would have wrecked the civilisation of the world, destroying finally its hopes of spiritual growth. The whole scheme of human evolution would have been by this time in ruins. On the other hand, if the Dark Host had never been in existence this War would never have taken place; the education of the German rulers and people that has been preparing them for their stupendous aggression for several centuries would never have been accomplished. Or, again, if we could imagine that all this had been going on as we have seen, but that by some Divine miracle the Dark Host had been itself swept off the face of the earth as soon as the great struggle began, then the German attack would have been driven back at once, and the War would have been over in our favour many months ago. Not that the powers of the great White Host would have been employed to annihilate German armies, but that in the absence of super-physical support, inspiration, and assistance, the aggression would everywhere have been successfully defeated with disastrous consequences to the assailants. The War has gone on because (in a certain limited sense) the Unseen Enemies and our Unseen Allies are evenly matched. The leaders of our spiritual foes have grown, during all the ages of their existence (compared to which historic periods are insignificant), to heights of development that render them equal to the daring task they have undertaken, the attack on the Divine scheme of human evolution. The spiritual agency by which the Divine purpose is guided towards its fulfilment in normal periods would not have been equal, or would not certainly have been equal, to the task of finally defeating the Dark Host if it were left altogether, and to the end, unaided.

But (in loose, materialistic language) the spiritual agency that governs the world in normal periods *knows* that it will have abnormal Divine support if the struggle

threatens to end in the victory of Evil over Good. That is why all who have the privilege of getting touch in any way with lofty planes of consciousness *know* that the war above will ultimately end in the defeat of the Dark Host, and consequently in the defeat of their physical plane representatives, the Germans. But here we have to recognise some principles affecting human affairs that are quite intelligible when seriously considered, though often forgotten. A familiar maxim, sometimes quoted with cynical intent, tells us that God helps those who help themselves. A little expanded the idea is clearly acceptable. Humanity as a whole —as frequently its single units individually—accomplishes progress by overcoming difficulty. If they were lifted over every obstacle as soon as they encountered it they would remain as children to the end. The present German attack on civilisation, supported as it is from higher planes by Evil Power, is the biggest obstacle to progress in the right direction that humanity has yet encountered in the history of the world. Shall we be able to get over it unaided ? (" We " of course in that connexion includes our Elder Brethren, the Powers of Good.) That remains to be seen. At all events we have got to try. We have got to go on trying—as though the fate of the world depended on our own exertions—as though the protection of our country from devastation, our towns from destruction, our women and children from unspeakable outrage, ourselves from indiscriminate slaughter, were to be achieved by the strength of our own right arms alone. How, it may be asked, are we to carry on the struggle in that spirit if we are allowed to *know* that in the long run—sooner or later—a supreme Divine intervention will put an end to the War ? And in a loftier sense the same thought may be applied to our glorious allies on the planes above. The answer may be put in a few perfectly truthful words. The end of the War, the

final defeat of the monstrous German aggression, is certain ; the duration of the War, the character of the sacrifices and sufferings we have to go through before it comes to an end, depends on ourselves.

This view—highly suspectible of amplification—does not mean that we are left unaided on this plane during the struggle. Besides the unseen conflict going on above, where forces unknown to physical science are wielded on both sides, such forces are brought into play in the midst of the fighting below. Many thrilling stories are in circulation relating to manifestations of a protective character that have been actually seen in operation by some of our own soldiers endowed more or less with clairvoyant vision. The drift of modern thought, although much less embittered in this respect than it used to be, is still incredulous concerning alleged intervention by super-physical beings. Nevertheless such intervention sometimes takes place, and has several times turned the tide of war when without it we or our Allies in the field would have incurred disasters seriously affecting the progress of events. The fact that in some cases stories of the kind referred to have been found in avowed fiction is nothing to the purpose. Swift many years ago correctly described the satellites of Mars in the course of his Laputa story, but that did not interfere with their ultimate discovery. Other examples might be quoted. But the reported cases of angelic help given to our troops are of minor importance compared with help which has warded off super-physical attack by the Unseen Enemy. And, as far as our England is concerned, few of us realise the extent to which we have to be grateful to our Unseen Allies for saving us from a fate definitely assigned to us by the original programme of the Dark Powers. If the War had begun, as was first intended, in the year 1913, this country would have been successfully invaded by the Germans, and the awful experiences of Belgium may

enable us to realise what that would have meant. The White Powers could not avert the outbreak altogether, but they succeeded in putting it off for about eighteen months, well spent by those in charge of our Navy in bringing its efficiency up to the point which has enabled it to guard our shores, and beyond that to save us from the paralysis of commerce and the stoppage of our food supplies that we all used to think would be the inevitable results of war with a great naval Power.

Starting from the broad principle already enunciated, that we must do all we can to help ourselves, important ramifications of that thought have to be considered. It does not merely mean that recruits, munitions, and money have to be provided to the utmost limit of our resources. It also has reference to our thoughts and our attitude of mind. The ordinary world has a very imperfect comprehension of the extent to which thought is a force. In the simplest aspect of that idea as bearing on the War, it is true that people who set aside some little time every day—ten minutes would be enough—for directing concentrated thought on the War, with the definite eager desire for the victory of our countrymen and Allies over their foes, are doing something, more than they imagine probably, to promote the result we all long for. We all long for it in a vague way : concentrated thought and desire exercised with good faith and intention, preferably at a definite time set aside for the purpose, is much more effective than the vague longing that we may feel as we read the news in the morning. If everybody in London—an arrangement practically impossible—were to devote thought in this way to the great purpose in view, the effect would be worth many army corps in the field. And there is another way in which thought is influential. The general attitude of mind which prevails throughout the nation is extremely important as affecting the combat of unseen forces raging on the higher planes.

Fear represents a disastrous attitude of mind. This is a commonplace of teaching for all who are making any personal efforts to gain knowledge of or mastery over beings of another order. Every treatise on the subject, ancient or modern, emphasises the idea. It has a deep significance in reference to the present War. Fearfulness is not a British characteristic, and in no extremely evil sense is it likely to operate with us as a nation ; but that which we ought to aim at is the attitude of mind which is exactly opposite to fear : utter confidence in the achievement we mean to bring off. Many of our leading men have sounded the right note in this respect, but confidence is weakened when we dwell too constantly on the shortcomings of the Government in this direction or in that. The situation is very intricate. In a country like this, where public opinion plays such an important part in influencing events, criticism of those who are directly guiding them is highly desirable. If mistakes are made and public opinion pounces on them, well and good. If measures desirable are neglected, and public opinion clamours for them, well and good. But the right attitude of mind in either case is that which aims at securing perfection, not that which becomes anxious and despondent because perfection is not attained. We are a nation used to grumbling, and we shall go on grumbling and sometimes do good that way, but let us grumble, so to speak, in a light-hearted way, not with gloom and apprehension. That last-mentioned attitude depresses our friends and gives delight and encouragement to our enemies, alow and aloft. Our unfortunate enemies " alow " are vaguely hoping to use the power of thought against us by cultivating hate and pouring it out, as they think, at the " one enemy " they cannot reach with their guns. They little understand the laws that govern thought. A thought impulse which fails in its effect recoils on its author. Those who are thinking

in the interest of the whole human race, whose welfare is the object of the Dark Powers' attack, need have no fear of such recoil. If it could be conceived as possible, which is not the case, that would only mean a good effect if any. But the Germans' fury of hate directed at England is essentially evil in its nature. It would do us harm if it reached its destination. But what is it intended to do ? To create fear amongst us and so play into the hands of the Unseen Enemy. But we all know it has created no such feeling. It has simply provoked laughter. And that means that it has completely recoiled on its authors, this time annoying their unseen tyrants rather than themselves, because the force belongs to the mental plane and could have no visible physical effect either way.

By what ghastly train of circumstance has it come about that the German people have become the miserable instruments of an attempt, by the most stupendously evil forces that have ever played a part in human affairs, to wreck the Divine purpose ? The first answer is that human agency of some kind was indispensable from the point of view of the Dark Host. For good or evil, intervention by spiritual powers in human affairs must be carried out by means appropriate to the end in view —through human agency of some kind, which can be made use of as a channel for the transmission on to the physical plane of spiritual forces that could not operate upon it without such agency, any more than the force generated at an electric power station could reach the lamps to be lighted by it without wires to conduct it. In the great attack on the world's welfare a nation was required as the agency—a nation in which it might be possible to cultivate with protracted care the unholy ambition of dominating all others. *Nemo repente*, etc. The cultivation has been going on for generations. Writers who have long since passed away were evilly inspired to exalt the idea. One cannot but admit with

regret that there must have been germs of an unhealthy order in the German character to make its development possible, but its growth till the whole nation became morally diseased was due to the unseen enemy. One can trace that influence, looking back now, all through the history of Prussia as a kingdom. It was there, from that centre, that the evil propaganda radiated. For a long while other German States were antipathetic to Prussia. After 1870 they rejoiced in the new dignity of Germany as a whole, and looked on Prussia as the agency through which it had been acquired. They accepted the Prussian system. Their education by the Powers of Evil was progressing. Bismarck in due time (unconsciously guided) carried it on gaily. The present Emperor, very psychically susceptible, was employed to rush it forward to its culmination. Finally the whole nation, with negligible exceptions, becomes more or less susceptible in the same way, and we find ourselves fighting in self-defence against a mad nation in arms. With the cunning of madness they long disguised their purpose sufficiently to mislead British statesmen in authority. Considering how completely we were unprepared, it is wonderful — looking back — that we survived the first surprise. That result only becomes intelligible when we realise that the nations defending themselves from an attack designed for their utter destruction are supported by Unseen Allies equal to the stupendous task, so little appreciated in its magnitude by commonplace observation, of confronting the Unseen Enemy.

Even without realising this, common sense shows that the present War is one which we must carry on to its logical conclusion. A proper comprehension of its unseen character emphasises this view in a limitless degree. There are people among us foolish enough, or mentally blind enough, to think that the present situation is one to which the principle of loving one's

enemies applies. That principle is often beautifully applicable to the petty quarrels of private life. In a quarrel between A and B it would apply, but if B knows that A is seeking not merely to wound him, but to destroy all the other letters of the alphabet, B may be sorry to have to do it, but he must kill A, under the guidance of his love for the other letters. In this War those who fight, and those who can only help to inspire the fighting, are doing so to save their fellow-countrymen —and above all their fellow-countrywomen—from murder and outrage and fiendish cruelty in every form. The experience of Belgium shows us what would happen here if Germans conquered in this War. Many of them have declared that the treatment of the Belgians would seem gentle in the retrospect, compared with that they would resort to with us if once they could dominate this hated region. With the power behind them, suppressing for the time all the impulses of ordinary humanity, it is certain that they would, if they could, act up to such threats. Talk, under such conditions, of surrounding the whole situation with an atmosphere of love and sympathy is like preaching the Gospel to a cobra in the act of striking. It is not only incompatible with the views this article has embodied : it is a defiance of the physical plane evidence we have to deal with in the various atrocity reports, every detail of which should be kept in mind as long as the War lasts.

But the purposes we have to work out need not be alone dictated by horror at the notion of allowing a mad nation guided by fiends to dominate the world : they are quite as definitely dictated by love and reverence for the sublime Beings, the agents of Divine love and benevolence, who are known—by those of us who have some touch with unseen planes of consciousness—to be actually fighting on our side. As many writers making no claim to specific knowledge concerning the super-physical world have recognised from the first, this is a

Holy War that we are waging. It is that not merely because it is waged in the defence of the rights of weaker nations, in vindication of the sanctity of the solemn pledge, but because it is fought in alliance with the spiritual Powers representing the purpose of God on earth against an attack on the part of those in rebellion against God, who represent the idea of hatred as opposed to the idea of love, the promotion of human suffering as an object in itself gratifying to a hideous emotion few of us can comprehend, which actually finds joy in the sight of others' pain. That against which we are in arms is Evil personified. The exhilarating thought which should make us brave in sacrifice, resolute in fight, joyous in conquest, is that Good personified is by our side in the struggle, that we are co-operating with Divine Agency in our resolute determination to destroy once for all the infamous military machine that the Germans—under diabolical obsession—have forged for the destruction of the world. When the ultimate victory shall have been achieved, when the spiritual foe shall have been vanquished and will thenceforth be unable to play any part in human affairs, a time may come when gentler motives may prevail. Till then we must carry on the War with the vivid consciousness that the utter annihilation of the hostile military organisation is essential to the future welfare of mankind. When we have accomplished that, future generations, perhaps gaining spiritual enlightenment as time goes on, will realise that, in the days of the mighty and prolonged battle, we were fighting under the guidance and with the help of those whose lofty development, already won, enabled them to know that the stern duty they were fulfilling in the combat was the direct inspiration of Divine Will.

WHEN THE DARK HOSTS ARE VANQUISHED

WHILE suffering has to be endured its poignancy can only be slightly alleviated, if at all, by assurances that a better time is coming. And indeed for individual sufferers whom the War has wounded in their deepest affections, promise of a good time coming would be almost insulting. Byron's beautiful verse concerning those who "mourn, but smile at length and smiling mourn" is qualified by the tenderest appreciation of the still surviving grief. But it is possible to take a national as well as an individual view of the War in progress, and across the lurid prospect of the immediate future to survey—if as yet only in imagination—the probable condition of the world when even that future will have melted into the past.

As I have indicated in my previous article, we are fully entitled to feel sure as a nation collectively that this War will not merely be brought to an end sooner or later, but will end in the triumph of right and the defeat of the diabolically guided attack by Germany on the civilisation of mankind. We know this, for one reason, because we comprehend the British character which we share, and realise the certainty that we shall persevere in combating that attack till it is finally disintegrated. Some of us arrive at the same conclusion by realising that unseen forces of stupendous dignity are involved in the struggle going on, and that no matter how terribly powerful may be those that work for evil, a law prevails in the Universe that ensures the ultimate supremacy of any Divine purpose with which the final success of evil aggression is incompatible. No doubt, while the struggle is going on, the healthiest attitude of mind for those engaged in it is, or may be, that which leaves the Divine purpose out of account

for the moment—which concentrates itself entirely on the idea that the victory of right depends on our own courage and determination—and most undeniably the intermediate course of events leading up to victory is so dependent. Too ever-present a consciousness that all will be well in the end might almost operate to weaken effort, while, on the other hand again, doubt about the end might be even more injurious to our *moral*. Meanwhile anxiety on that score may perhaps be dismissed on the ground that the *moral* of the British people may safely be left to take care of itself, even though that attribute is inextricably mixed with a conviction that governing authorities are generally stupid, and bound in a peculiar degree to acknowledge once a week that they have done those things that they ought not to have done —besides neglecting the others. Continually assured of this by critics in the Press, they may be guarded from the development of dangerous self-satisfaction in presence of any good results actually accomplished, and as for the critics themselves, the conviction that in consequence of Government stupidity the country is going to the dogs, is somehow compatible with a serene trust in its ultimate buoyancy—Government blunders notwithstanding.

Now if some of us cling to something more than that vague trust, and think we have reason to believe that, beyond the awfully clouded horizons all round us, there is fair weather in store, shall we be enfeebling or invigorating the public attitude of mind—or tending to produce one or other of these effects—by attempting to describe that future fair weather more definitely? For those who, in millions, engender the public attitude of mind by their thinking, such forecasts will appear too unsubstantial to be effective one way or the other. But the sufferings the War gives rise to are of two kinds. There are first its heavy burdens of all sorts, financial and generally oppressive, culminating in the burden so

splendidly borne by vast numbers who take part in the strife or put themselves in training to do this. Then, secondly, there are for others the burden of accomplished sorrow when those they love have been sacrificed for the salvation of the world. For them even the far-sighted view of the future which even takes into account the mysteries of the Unseen worlds may be soothing to some appreciable extent, but that idea claims independent treatment. As regards the nation at large it should not allow too confident a trust in a good time coming to enfeeble its mental attitude, but it is really important that this attitude should be one of exhilarated self-reliance. General depression would be distinctly mischievous in its effect. The more definitely therefore general good spirits can be sustained by dwelling in thought on the compensations of the future, the better it will be for the combatants at the Front—whether we think of " the Front " as meaning merely the trenches or as including the bearers of the War's burdens at home.

So let us endeavour—without fear of doing harm by making any of us too idly reliant on unseen help—to realise in imagination what must be the future awaiting the civilised world when the devil-driven attack it is fighting against for the moment shall have left its red record on the history of our race—a finished chapter of the story that will tell later generations how this wonderful generation beheld Satan vanquished. What will be the record of the next chapter ?

We can only begin to guess at that with any likelihood of being able to foresee it, if we work in thought with the idea that Evil Beings of great spiritual power are actually at the back of the enemy we are fighting in the field. That idea is borne in on many minds by the behaviour of the Germans all through the War, but it involves a great many other ideas of no small importance in connexion with human affairs. For all who cling in any way to orthodox theology the notion of

Evil Powers intervening more or less definitely in our affairs is one that cannot be abandoned. They may decline to take Bible stories at the foot of the letter, but unless they discard them absolutely with contempt even in their most refined allegorical sublimation, they must work with a residual conception to the effect that some such intervention has actually been operative from an early stage in the great human drama. In harmony with that conception the latest developments of belief among highly unorthodox students of spiritual mysteries point with precision in the same direction. And that belief at all events puts an intelligible face upon much trouble with which the world has been afflicted throughout its history. Suppose we put it aside for the moment, treating all the traditions of theology as so much childish nonsense—a course which must be followed if we insist on throwing the Satanic hypothesis overboard altogether—we have to fall back on a curious conception of human nature in order to explain human history. We must regard it as innately depraved ; as turned out of Divine creative hands with a natural predilection for all that is anti-Divine. To say that all the cruelty, hatred, and blood-thirst that has disfigured the records of the past has been the natural fruit of human passion, is certainly to declare the creative undertaking that has engendered the human family a somewhat deplorable failure—if we start with the assumption that it had a benevolent inspiration at the outset. By any hypothesis, indeed, we have to grant a considerable range of free play to human will, but it is only by adopting the Satanic hpyothesis, in some form or other, that we can account for the prodigiously evil growths of free will. We can recognise that selfishness is a natural characteristic of humanity —till neutralised by spiritual intelligence. In early childhood we have all illustrated the principle. But spiritual intelligence prompted by love is an equally

natural development. An external stimulus is needed to expand the selfishness of the child into the depravity of the grown man, when he in maturity develops the tendencies that account for crime, warfare, and cruelty.

The Satanic hypothesis, whether we work it out to perfection under Milton's guidance or deal with it more vaguely, would account for these intricate phenomena. That conception shows the world under the influence of an ever-present force aggravating every condition that makes for human suffering. Wherever, whether in private life, in industrial life, or internationally, friction of interests provokes unfriendly feeling, the Satanic influence accentuates the trouble. Without such cultivation it might or probably would fizzle away harmlessly. In the culture of Satanic influence the evil microbes multiply. That clumsy blockhead Othello would not have committed murder without the influence of Iago. No great war that has devastated the world would ever have been waged without the pressure of the unseen influences working in the background to obscure the otherwise obvious motives for keeping the peace. So with class jealousies and labour troubles. Neither the rich nor the poor, neither the employer nor the employed, are naturally vile. Sometimes they have, or seem to have, conflicting interests, and as a general rule some thickness of the head which tends to mutual distrust. It is only when this tendency is as carefully cultivated as the gardener's nursling in a hothouse that it can give rise to fierce quarrelling, rioting, massacre, or the minor miseries of industrial strife. Failure to understand this fundamental idea—repudiation of the Satanic hypothesis ensuing from the gross caricature of it presented to us by the medieval Churches—has given rise to a false philosophy of life that has, to put the idea abruptly, made God responsible for suffering. An amiable but misdirected impulse has made people submissive to suffering, as chastisement imposed upon them

by a loving Father for their good. And a more subtle development of the same idea has taught many thinkers to regard spiritual progress as only possible by the conquest of difficulty, by the endurance of pain, by submission to the ordeals of suffering. That false philosophy has become so ingrained in our thinking that its dislodgment from the mind is exceedingly difficult. "One by one we must all file on through the narrow aisles of pain." That doctrine is rooted in poetry and religious feeling. But it is at the best but half a truth. The path of suffering, bravely trodden, does no doubt lead to the spiritual goal, but the Divine programme did not provide for the suffering with which it came to be strewn. The path—the great law-guiding evolution—leads to the goal whether left clear or encumbered with obstacles. Humanity under some imaginable conditions might have evolved by the method of Harmony and Peace. The intervention of a mighty Power making for Evil has failed to defeat its evolution, but has entangled the evolution with suffering.

A pretty analogy here may appeal to the fancy of those who have made a study (under favourable conditions) of the natural law which regulates the ultimate transfer of animal consciousness to the higher realms of human life. When the highest animal form has been attained to, the consciousness seated in it is almost ready for an ascent to a higher form still. It becomes quite ready, when loving treatment by a higher being already human evolves the love principle in the still animal consciousness. Or, strange to say, in cases where the animal in question is horribly ill-treated, extreme suffering gives rise to the same result, the actual differentiation of the consciousness seated in the animal form, till then too vague to be thought of as an individuality. (Woe betide the author of the extreme suffering, of course ; but that is another story.)

Certainly if we accept the idea so far developed, that

human evolution was entangled with suffering by an intervention by no means essential to the original Divine plan, we have to meet the mystery why that intervention was permitted. By the common consent of all who have any touch with super-normal sources of knowledge or information, the final defeat of Satan in this complicated war, waged on more than one plane of existence, is certain because supreme Divine power does not intend (that much has come down to us) that this world shall be finally wrecked and its evolutions reduced to ruin. If the German aggression should triumph on this plane, that would show us that the still more terrible aggression on loftier planes had triumphed in the first instance. Neither contingency is to be apprehended. But why then, it may be asked, did not supreme Divine Power intervene sooner to avert all this terrible suffering ? In another form it is the same question put by every intelligent child when bewildered by religious teaching : " Why did not God kill the Devil ? " Grown-up wisdom generally takes refuge in some disingenuous pretence of being shocked, but an honest reply might be " Perhaps He will ; but the mills of God grind slowly." " Kill," of course, is an inappropriate expression, but, as already noted, all trustworthy assurances are to the effect that eventually the present attack on the schemes of evolution to which we belong will be overthrown, that Satan (and his miserable dupes) will be vanquished, and then that the world will enter on an altogether new era, the character of which it is now within our power more or less clearly to define.

Judging by the experience of the world so far, many of us imagine that even after this War is over, and even if for a time the nations will be sick of warfare, we shall still be bound, in one way or another, to " make perpetual moan, still from one sorrow to another thrown." Labour troubles it is often supposed will culminate in more serious disturbance of the industrial community

than we have ever seen before. Gloomy speculation even reads " red ruin and the breaking up of laws " in the financial strain to which we shall be subject and the fearful taxation that will involve. These painful predictions rest on the unconscious assumption that the influences that have hitherto been exerted to aggravate friction will be operative still. Satan once vanquished and dismissed finally from all intervention in the affairs of this world, there will be no such influence at work. On the contrary, an influence will be raining down upon us, in a way quite susceptible of explanation, that will be working to promote every effort aiming at harmony and peace.

Modern thinking has been well disposed to welcome the idea that a law resembling the conservation of energy on the physical plane works on what may be called the moral plane, to do justice both in regard to men and women individually and also in regard to nations. In that way some writers have vaguely imagined that this War is wreaking vengeance on the suffering nations for collective offences in the past. The conjecture is quite ill-founded. The suffering we are undergoing is no fruit of evil-doing on our part, or on that of the nations to which we belong, but is an excrescence on history due to the great spiritual attack of which the Germans have been made the tools. How then can the law of Divine justice be satisfied ? Only by compensation. In the minor complications of individual life undeserved suffering is compensated for in later lives—the full theory requiring more elaborate interpretation than is possible here—and so in later generations the suffering nations as such will rise to heights of moral progress as a consequence of what they have gone through, the dignity of which cannot be overestimated. It would be rash at present to predict precisely the shape that progress will assume. It will not necessarily imply the mere restoration or increased accumulation of material wealth,

though that may incidentally arise, but it will certainly include the happiness naturally accruing from a generally diffused desire to promote happiness all round—a freer play of all noble emotions; a reign of love, to use a compact expression, that will have replaced the reign of mutual jealousy, distrust, and hatred.

That is the direction in which it has always been manifest that the higher evolution of mankind must lead; but hitherto the accomplishment of effective progress in that direction has seemed very far off. A stupendous convulsion has afflicted the world. We are still in the midst of its most agonising throes, but we can vividly discern the ultimate consequences. It must operate in the way here faintly sketched, to accelerate progress of the lofty order referred to. This "grey old earth" will not all at once be converted into a paradise. There will still be individual sorrows—where previous action has engendered them—individual relapses into the lower conditions of life from which as a whole the community will have emerged, but the keynote of the future period will be happiness of the kind arising from a general desire all round to promote the welfare of other people, instead of a desire to grasp what each wants for himself, even, if necessary, at other people's expense. One cannot all at once realise in imagination a world carried on under the influence of such principles, but the achievement will be partially possible if we keep in mind the difference between a world saturated with powerful though unseen influences promoting enmity, selfishness, and greed, and a world in which that force is entirely extinguished, and an equally powerful unseen force of a wholly opposite character promoting kindliness, generosity, and goodwill.

Apply the principle in imagination to the domain of politics—to our domestic politics, if we concentrate the thought for a moment on our own destinies in the world of the new era. Political activity from which individual

ambition (selfishness) is eliminated will be incompatible with the maintenance of party strife—or if there will remain divergent views as to what is best for the country as a whole, their representatives will be in search of a common understanding instead of being in search of devices by which an ignorant, multitudinous vote may be captured in spite of itself. The old party system—already partly abandoned under the unifying influence of a great national peril—made each side too much afraid of trickery on the other to be frank in the attempt to realise its own actual beliefs. But to be more explicit at present would be inexpedient while we are still no more than half emancipated from the Satanic influence that has coloured political life so long.

Just in the same way the troubles of industrial life will subside when all undercurrents of feeling, even if almost unconsciously, are tinged with the desire for harmony and peace, instead of with the desire for a fight in which it may be possible to crush the other side, whichever that may be. As for sectarian bitterness, there will be no room for that in future religion in which the Unseen Enemy will no longer be playing a part—a part played hitherto with all the greater effect by reason of having been shielded from view by the growth of what was supposed to be common sense.

And what will replace the influence that has stained the records of Christianity with the hideous persecutions of the past, with the religious wars of the Middle Ages as ghastly in their consequences as those of political aggression? We have in that connexion to contemplate very thrilling possibilities—in looking forward to the new era. There never has been a time when current imagination has been untouched with a belief in a "Second Coming" of the spiritual manifestations that introduced Christianity into the world. Enthusiasm always fixes on a near future for the expected Incarnation, undismayed by the disappointments of the past. Delu-

sions on that subject are operative in the present day, but it may be premature as yet to attempt their dispersion by venturing on any more authentic forecast. All that it is safe to feel sure of is this : the purification of the world, by the elimination of the evil influence that has poisoned its progress till now, will render possible such a plain manifestation of Divine power that the idea of a Second Coming eventually is more than acceptable to all who are endeavouring to forecast the character of the new era. Certainly the prospect is liable to be completely misconceived. The world is not in need of a new " Teacher." No startling novelties in ethical theory can possibly be in reserve for us. But the ethics we already have may be so filled with a new spirit as to have vital influence on the world instead of being politely disregarded as amiable platitudes. From what focus the new inspiration will emanate we do not yet know. We can only feel quite sure that the conditions provided for it will be appropriate to modern civilisation, and wholly unlike those of the Gospel story. The early teaching crept up into the world's thought from lowly beginnings. The Influence that will vivify it—later on in this wonderful century—will radiate over us from lofty levels. Divine wisdom will not make mistakes from which commonplace humanity would be guarded by its own lesser intelligence.

But " we shall not be there to see " ! That is the sad cry of so many in the present generation who have to bear all the horrors which inaugurate the century, and look forward to death—at the usual limit of years—as practically putting an end to things as far as they are concerned. So much for the spiritual teaching of the past. The conception of death gathering significance for many thinkers in these days treats it in no mere vague phrase as *janua vitæ*, but as a stage—a very attractive and interesting stage if properly understood—on the road to another period of physical existence.

Certainly, as a rule, so long a stretch of more attractive existence on higher planes of consciousness intervenes before each of us in turn takes up again the burden of incarnate life, that its resumption within any century that sees it laid down for a time is highly improbable at the first glance. But we are living in improbable times. It may be that many of those who "pass on" in the midst of this agonising struggle will be too content with the condition they will reach to accept the offer of renewed life on the physical plane. And no compulsion will be exercised. But the same readiness for self-sacrifice at the call of duty that has hurried thousands into what seemed death will operate to render most of them willing to make another sacrifice, and return to physical life in order to take part in the work of carrying on the progress of the new era. Will some of us be inclined to complain that the new lives will have no conscious link with those now surrendered, any more than these have with still earlier lives? Again the great principle of Compensation will come into play. As a natural consequence of an immediate (or nearly immediate) reincarnation the returning multitude (for we may fairly think of it as that) will generally be endowed with faculties, rare amongst us as yet, which will enable them to be definitely conscious of the higher plane they have left for a time, and a previous physical experience. Such faculties may not be the endowment of all, but they will be so general that the continuity of life, its varied manifestation on different planes, and the immense importance of effort and progress on this plane, will be matters of common knowledge.

And now, in connexion with this forecast of the future, we have to recognise that we are still in the midst of the terrible present—of the great ordeal through which humanity is passing. We have still to fight, though we may indulge in some brief glances at the conditions awaiting us beyond victory. They ought to be inspiring

and stimulating. They may be thought of as a " breathing space," like that which even Horatius in his great fight found needful till " like a wild cat mad with wounds " he sprang at Astur's face. We in turn must drive " through teeth and skull and helmet " the sword that shall free the world from the unspeakable horrors that would attend triumph of the Devil-driven German enemies. That triumph is impossible in a world ultimately resting on a Divine sanction, and if by a strained hypothesis we could imagine the struggle going on till there were none left on either side to protract it—a fairer humanity would still emerge from the vast battlefield and the ultimate purpose of evolution be fulfilled. But we need not play in imagination with so far-fetched a contingency, unless indeed its presentation to the German mind might penetrate the veil of insane delusion in which it is still shrouded by its horrible spiritual tyrant. But the time is hardly ripe for the indulgence of such a hope. While we are still in the throes of conflict, a more profitable course for imagination to take would be concerned with the idea that if we could vanquish Satan and his crew with our own unaided strength—or at all events with no more help than we have been getting all along from Unseen Allies—that would perhaps give rise to more glorious results for humanity in the future than even those that might attend an ultimate rescue due to *deus ex machina*.

Thus every thought about the War, whether inspired by the simple patriotism of the man in the street or guided to still higher levels by super-normal knowledge, brings us back to the emergencies of the moment. The world—a concise expression for the humanity it bears—is going to be saved with all its illimitable possibilities awaiting its later evolution, but if we can save it ourselves without a Divine intervention in our favour, that might indeed be an even more splendid consummation than one accomplished for us by supreme power from above.

Is it just conceivably possible that delay in the final intervention is due to such a thought ? Few of us will dare to be so arrogant as to guess at the working of the Divine Mind, but the idea just suggested, surely encouraging and, so far as it may operate, calculated to stimulate energy, has the merit of being quite in harmony with an ordinary, mundane, common-sense view of our duty. And indeed all of us who have any opportunity of getting in touch sometimes with super-physical wisdom will be vividly impressed by the ever-recurrent discovery that, even when that higher wisdom may open out new horizons for our sight, it never offends against the simple canons of our own mundane consciousness—the plain guidance of common sense.

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